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PROPOSALS FOR ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADDIS ABABA PLAN OF ACTION FOR STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA IN THE 1990S

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 683 (XXV) of May 1990, the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. In section 24 of the Plan of Action, ECA was requested to convene a working group meeting to further review and elaborate on its principles, objectives and recommendations and formulate detailed strategies for its implementation.

2. The present paper highlights the main actions undertaken since the adoption of the Plan of Action and points out some specific issues. The Committee is expected to provide guidance on relevant follow-up activities. Some historical background is first given on African statistical development which led to the formulation of this Plan of Action.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. History of African statistical development

3. Statistical offices were set up in a number of African countries in the late 1940s during the colonial period. The main purposes of such offices were to respond to the needs of the Treasury and/or to produce statistics for the colonial administration.

4. After independence, particularly in the early 1960s, many African countries continued with the statistical offices set up during the colonial period without trying to adapt them to the requirements of independent States. However, some countries started to review the structure of their statistical services. Most of the professional staff of the statistical services, including the management staff, were then expatriates. These were phased out progressively and as from the early 1970s only some of them remained under technical cooperation agreements. In the Portuguese-speaking African countries, most of the expatriate staff, if not all, left when the countries concerned obtained their independence, so that very few national professionals were available to take over the management of the statistical offices.

5. Professional-level training of African statisticians was initially given in overseas institutions, including universities. Later, appropriate institutions were set up within the region for the training of professional statisticians. However, there was a marked scarcity of potential candidates with a satisfactory background in mathematics.

6. The middle-level statistical staff initially received on-the-job training but from 1960 onwards, middle-level courses were established in a number of countries of the region, including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana and Morocco, with the assistance of the United Nations.

7. Many statistical offices remained attached to the ministries of finance after independence. It is therefore not surprising that emphasis was initially put on economic statistics, including international trade, consumer price index, household budget survey, agriculture, industry and labour. It was later, when ministries of planning were created in most African countries, that statistical offices were gradually attached to those ministries.

8. It was in the early 1970s that most African countries decided to pay due attention to demographic and social statistics, particularly following the 1970 round of population and housing censuses in the region. Financial assistance has been provided by UNFPA and other donor agencies for demographic data collection and analysis. At the sixth session of the Joint

Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, held in January 1990, it was expressed that there had been a tendency for external assistance to be concentrated in certain areas of statistics, such as demography, while other areas, like economic statistics, were neglected. However, it has to be acknowledged that the issue is not that of overemphasis on demographic information, which continues to be badly needed, but that of harmonious development of all areas of statistics in accordance with the national priorities.

9. It should be indicated that in the early 1960s, most of the data were processed manually, although a few were mechanically processed on the first generation of computers. The experience was that the results of the surveys which were processed manually were released more timely than those involving wholly or partly computer processing. This was due, among others, to lack of appropriate local expertise in data processing in view of inadequate training and little attention paid by some expatriate experts to transfer of skills, and to lack of maintenance of computer equipment. It should however be noted that the tabulation programmes used in computer processing were more comprehensive than those used in manual processing.

10. A number of technical cooperation programmes were launched since the early 1970s to assist African countries in building up self-reliance in the statistical field. These include, among others: the African Census Programme (ACP), financed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which was subsequently replaced by the Regional Advisory Service in Demographic Statistics (RASDS); the World Fertility Survey (WFS) which was carried out by the International Statistical Institute (ISI) in collaboration with the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), with funds provided by UNFPA and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other sources; the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP) and the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), which were established in 1978 by the legislative organs of ECA with their regional components executed by ECA and funded by UNDP; the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), coordinated by the Institute for Resource Development and funded by USAID; the Living Standard Measurement Study (LSMS), sponsored by the World Bank; the surveys under the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project, co-sponsored by UNDP, the World Bank and the African Development Bank (ADB); the Pan Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD), sponsored by the League of Arab States and supported by the Arab Gulf Fund (AGFUND), for UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO as well as the United Nations; and the Statistical Development Programme for Africa (SDPA) project which started at ECA in 1987 with UNDP financing and incorporated the regional components of AHSCP and STPA as well as a project in national accounts.

11. Towards the end of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the African continent suffered severe economic crisis. As a consequence, public expenditures were curtailed in many countries and this affected the process of statistical development which had been started. However, the economic crisis was not the only reason for the deterioration of African statistics. Among other reasons were the lack of appreciation of the role of quantitative information in development planning, the low status of statistical services vis-à-vis other government services, the lack of proper management of statistical services and the tendency towards routine of some statistical services.

12. Although the technical cooperation programmes in statistics mentioned above have achieved some successes towards statistical development in the African region, many of them could not be sustained when the funding ended or the expatriate experts left. The failure of some African countries to provide their share of project costs or to continue their support when the external financing ceases, the poor management of some statistical offices and the lack of motivation of national professionals are among the major difficulties in the successful implementation of these programmes. It should also be mentioned that, in many cases, there was no proper coordination and cooperation among the international agencies concerned which sometimes led to duplication of activities and wastage of resources.

B. Current state of African statistics

13. Most National Statistical Services (NSSs) are centralized, with a Central Statistical Office (CSO) which is responsible for the collection processing and dissemination of all kinds of statistical data. In many countries, there are also statistical units within sectoral ministries which are either part of the CSO or independent units. In addition, some organizations, like the central bank, are also producing data.

14. The CSO is generally attached to the ministry responsible for planning. The exceptions to this are, for example, the Ghana Statistical Service and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) of Egypt are autonomous bodies which are outside the civil service but remain in the public sector. In some countries, the status of the CSOs is relatively low in the government hierarchy and structure so that it is difficult for them to promote their programmes or to obtain the required funds.

15. Efforts have been made to train African statisticians although many national statistical offices still lack enough qualified staff due to brain drain to more attractive jobs in other government departments, parastatal and private sectors. There are currently 16 professional and/or middle-level training institutions, offering regional services, which participate in the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA). Eight of these institutions are French-speaking, seven English-speaking and one Portuguese-speaking. There are also eight associate STPA centres overseas which provide short-term and specialized training.

16. Many African statistical offices do not have adequate physical infrastructure and equipment as well as statistical libraries. However, most of CSOs are now equipped with micro-computers, although not yet in sufficient number in many cases. The advent of the micro-computer is revolutionalizing the way in which statistical activities are conducted. Also, the availability of a large number of software packages facilitates the task of the statistician. However, a number of CSOs have not been able to stay abreast of the rapid developments that are taking place in the fields of software and hardware technology. For example the use of desk-top publishing techniques is not yet common in statistical offices. Thus, there are still considerable delays between the completion of data processing and the publication of the results. This is the case of some countries which have not yet published all the reports relating to the 1980 round of population censuses (1976-1984) while the preparations for the 1990 round had already started in some cases.

17. Only about half of the countries of the region have statistical work programmes, which makes it difficult to relate resources and outputs and affects the management of statistical offices. There is also the need to improve working relationships between management and the other staff of CSOs.

18. The main sources of data continue to include censuses, surveys and, to a limited extent, administrative records. Almost all African countries have now undertaken at least one population census. Chad, the only country which has not yet carried out a full census so far, is preparing for it. However, it is a fact that population censuses entail very high costs. In view of financial constraints faced by many countries of the region, it would be advisable, in future, to explore ways and means of reducing such costs, for example through increasing use of sampling in censuses. Surveys are expected to play a central role in the agenda of Africa because of their relatively low cost and the possibility of obtaining the data more quickly. A number of African countries have formulated survey programmes on the basis of their own priorities and conditions. However, due to shortage of funds, many of these countries had to accept and implement surveys proposed by external agencies, which may not have been in their priorities. Administrative records have been used for many years for trade and financial statistics. However there is the need to explore also other records such as the social security in order to expand the subject coverage. Efforts should also continue to improve the civil registration systems and vital statistics collection in Africa.

19. Some improvements have been noted in the quality of data collected by CSOs but a lot still remains to be done in this area. Users and analysts of statistical data in the region, particularly those from universities as well as from multilateral and bilateral agencies, are critical of the quality of the data. More applications of statistical data are expected to occur in the African region in many fields of activity such as policy formulation, planning, administration, research and teaching. African statistical offices should therefore take the challenge of producing the types of data which meet the requirements of users.

20. The issue of measuring the contribution of women to development has received particular attention in recent years, especially within the framework of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Relevant initiative has already been taken by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office and ECA, by preparing a Handbook on Compilation of Statistics on Women in the Informal Sector, Industry, Trade and Services in Africa. The national statistical services should endeavour to collect data on the role of women in development as part of their work programme in the 1990s.

21. Efforts should also be made to promote the role of women in statistical development. During a recent meeting organized by ECA, it was pointed out that there were very few women in national statistical services and also in training, both as trainers and trainees. It was observed that women would contribute immensely in the development of statistics by being active in these areas.

22. Many African countries do not have any mechanisms for coordination of statistical activities among producers and between producers and users. This is an important issue which

should receive due attention in the 1990s in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to achieve greater harmonization of concepts, definitions and classifications at the national level.

23. As already indicated, coordination among donor agencies, involving the recipient country, should also be strengthened to avoid unnecessary competition and wastage of resources as well as to promote cooperation.

24. The above historical background points out only some of the major issues relating to statistical development in the region. A comprehensive review of the overall position was undertaken by an intergovernmental working group meeting on the implementation of the Plan of Action and by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, as reported in the next section of the present paper.

III. THE ADDIS ABABA PLAN OF ACTION

25. It should be recalled that an assessment of statistical capacity was undertaken by ECA in 1989 in 32 African countries under the UNDP-financed World Bank/ECA project on "Data collection related to development programmes and aid flows in Africa". The results of this assessment led to the recommendation by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, at its sixth session in January 1990, of the adoption of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. As already mentioned, the Plan of Action was formally adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers in May 1990.

26. The objectives of the Plan of Action are as follows:

(a) To achieve national self-sufficiency in statistical production, including the creation of a comprehensive national statistical data base by the end of the century;

(b) To improve the reliability and relevance of data produced in African countries;

(c) To undertake production of data required for formulating, monitoring and evaluating programmes designed to restructure and transform African economies.

(d) To improve the timeliness in the production and dissemination of statistical information;

(e) To increase awareness of the importance of statistical information among users;

(f) To strengthen and sustain statistical training programmes at various levels and institutions;

(g) To promote contact and dialogue among African statisticians;

(h) To encourage improvement in the organizational set-up of the NSSs and assure their autonomy; and

(i) To improve coordination of all statistical development programmes at both national and international levels.

27. The Plan of Action recommends steps which African Governments and international organizations should take to achieve these objectives. In particular, a working group meeting was to be convened to discuss in detail the principles, objectives and recommendations of the Plan of Action and come out with strategies and implementation programmes.

28. The working group meeting on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s was held from 16 to 20 July 1991 at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, Kenya. It was attended by representatives of 20 African countries, including users of statistics, the directors of four STPA Centres and one associate centre, and a number of United Nations agencies as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies. These were: ILO, FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, National Institute of Statistics of France (INSEE), Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the United Kingdom, Statistics Sweden, Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), African Development Bank (ADB) and African Statistical Association (AFSA).

29. The working group considered a draft strategy paper prepared by an ECA consultant. Before preparing the report, the consultant undertook missions to ECA and to a number of United Nations agencies as well as to other multilateral and bilateral organizations.

30. After a critical review of the problems encountered by national statistical services in the region and lengthy discussions of the draft strategy paper prepared by the consultant, the working group adopted a Strategy for the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. This strategy document was further reviewed by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers at its seventh session in March 1992.

31. The revised strategy document together with an expanded summary are being submitted to the ECA Conference of Ministers as background materials. The strategy document contains three parts. Part I is a review of African statistical development during the period 1960-1990, including a brief account of technical and financial assistance to Africa in this area. Major challenges in the 1990s are also highlighted. These include the competition between internal and external demands for data, the selection of a minimum or core list of subjects to be covered, the management of statistical offices, formulation of data dissemination policy, marketing of statistical outputs, determination of statistical priorities, coordination, increased involvement of women in statistical development, and the need for methods and standard units in NSSs.

32. Part II of the document outlines the urgent actions which should be taken to ensure that a good national statistical system is set in place and that the outputs of the system are effectively used.

33. Finally, part III proposes ways and means of implementing the various elements of the strategy.

IV. SELECTED MEASURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION

34. The strategy spells out tasks to be performed at the national, subregional, regional as well as global levels to revitalize African statistics.

35. The actions to be taken at the national level include the following: (a) setting up of a Needs Assessment/Programme Review and Strategy Development (NA/PRSD) team; (b) preparation of statistical development plans; (c) Development of annual or biennial work programme budgets; (d) data processing and data analysis plans; (e) data storage, retrieval and dissemination including development of statistical data bases; (f) creation of public awareness; and (g) adoption of new directions for technical cooperation.

36. Actions at the regional and subregional level include: (a) development of concepts, definitions and classifications suited to the African region; (b) strengthening of statistical training and research; (c) provision of short-term advisory services; (d) development of regional statistical information system; (e) preparation of guidelines in respect of national statistical development plans; (f) preparation and adaptation of handbooks and manuals, coordination of technical cooperation at the regional level; and (g) role of African non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in enhancing statistical capacity in the African region.

37. Actions proposed to be taken at the global level are: (a) umbrella programmes and networking arrangements; (b) development of global standards, handbooks and manuals; (c) provision of interregional advisory services; and (d) machinery for coordination of technical cooperation at the global level.

38. Only a few issues will be raised in the present paper for consideration by the Committee. These relate to the establishment of NA/PRSD teams and their terms of reference, the creation of public awareness of statistics, the adoption of new directions for technical cooperation and the provision of regional advisory services.

A. Needs Assessment/Programme Review and Strategy Development (NA/PRSD)

39. The first step to be taken is the appointment by each country of a Needs Assessment Team or a Programme Review and Strategy Development Team as the situation and conditions vary from one country to another.

40. The team is expected to carry out two main functions:

(a) To draw lessons from past experience and to identify needs and priorities, by:

(i) Ascertaining country policies and priorities in respect of economic and social development, population planning, migration, economic activity and conditions of employment, status of women and children; environment, etc;

(ii) Identifying the availability and timeliness of existing statistical outputs, and the extent to which they are used;

(iii) Assessing the extent to which existing statistics have satisfied and are expected to satisfy users in setting up and monitoring national plans and policies,

(iv) Ascertaining past and expected future gaps in the available statistics, assess the constraints that these gaps have placed on the work of users, and set priorities for existing or required statistical outputs.

(v) Reviewing the statistical programme and recommend new or revised statistical outputs or the discontinuation of low priority and unused data. In particular, the team should recommend a detailed three-year programme and give a broad perspective of a long-term programme;

(vi) Assessing the infrastructure and institutional capabilities for project management, data collection, data processing and data base development, dissemination and statistical analysis, not only in respect of the national statistical system but also the analytical capacities in the agencies responsible for planning and policy making;

(vii) Making recommendations concerning statistical advisory bodies, statistical legislation, organisation and management of statistical organizations and services;

(viii) Reviewing and making recommendations concerning statistical training and research in the country, including "in-house" training, on-the-job training as well as more formal training by government and non-governmental bodies;

(ix) Reviewing previous external assistance to the statistical development of the country, covering issues such as the extent and sources of funds, the extent and content of assistance, the degree of capability building and its sustainablity, the coordination of assistance, etc., and making recommendations on these matters to guide and make the most effective use of possible future assistance. The team should also identify and cost any external aid inputs which are envisaged to be achieved in the statistical programmes which the team recommends; and

(x) Commenting upon likely or possible constraints to the implementation of programmes for statistical development in the country;

(b) To formulate a draft 5-10 year national statistical development plan on the basis of the findings in a above, by:

(i) Defining clearly the objectives of the plan, the problems to be addressed during the plan period and possible solutions;

(ii) Ascertaining the human and material resources required for the implementation of the plan;

(iii) Identifying external assistance needs and possible sources of funds; and

(iv) Relating the proposed national statistical development plan to the government's strategies, priorities and planning cycle.

41. It is suggested that the Minister who is responsible for the national statistical agency should be the authority for appointing the NA/PRSD team and for issuing the terms of reference.

42. It is acknowledged that no single model for the composition of the NA/PRSD team could be proposed. However, it is recommended that the team consist of about five members and be chaired by an eminent personality who should be from the user side. Apart from the chairman, other members of the team should be equally divided between statisticians and users and their specialization should cover all major fields. Ideally, the members should all be senior and respected nationals drawn from government, private or parastatal (including university) sectors. The director of the national statistical agency should preferably be a member of the team but not the chairman.

43. There might be the need for some international experts to join the team. Countries requiring such assistance will need to invite appropriate external agencies to participate. These may be United Nations agencies, other multilateral or bilateral agencies as the country deems appropriate. It is assumed that each agency will be responsible for all costs associated with their representation in the team. The international experts should have extensive knowledge of quantitative analysis and/or data collection and dissemination procedures, working experience in developing countries and appropriate language qualifications.

44. The NA/PRSD exercise should start as soon as possible, preferably during 1992, so that the initiative for statistical development in each country will not be delayed. The exercise may last for two or three months. The team is expected to produce two main outputs, namely a report on statistical needs assessment and a draft plan for national statistical development. The report and the draft plan should be addressed to the Minister responsible for statistics who appointed the team, and copied to the relevant permanent secretary and the director of the national statistical agency.

45. The needs assessment report and the draft plan for statistical development should then be discussed with users and producers at a formal meeting and revised by the body overseeing the work of the national statistical agency on the basis of comments received.

46. The Minister responsible for statistics, after due consideration and approval of the needs assessment report and the revised draft plan for statistical development, may take the necessary action to obtain the government decision on statistical development in the country. The Minister

may then direct the appropriate government officials to implement the recommendations and the national statistical development plan accepted by the government.

47. It should be pointed out that the national statistical development plan should be an input to the overall national development plan and should constitute the main guiding document for the NSS to prepare its work programme budgets.

48. In view of the different stages of statistical development experienced by countries of the region, it is difficult to generalize. Therefore, countries may wish to adapt the above suggestions to suit their local conditions.

B. Creation of public awareness for statistics

49. There is lack of public awareness of the importance of statistics in everyday life in many developing countries, particularly in Africa. Statistics should therefore be introduced into primary and secondary schools and should be seen as an important tool for better understanding of one's social and economic environment. Statistical techniques and their applications should thus be taught across all subjects. Efforts should also be made to cultivate the interest of young students in statistics so as to encourage them to pursue professional-level statistical training, particularly post-graduate and specialized training. Special attention should be accorded to this issue in Portuguese-speaking African countries now that a professional-level statistical training centre has been opened especially for them in Lisbon, Portugal, similar to the centre in Paris, France, which is mostly for the French-speaking African countries (CESD-Paris).

50. One of the recommendations to African Governments, contained in the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, stipulates that the Economic Community of West African States' day, 18 November should be adopted as African Statistics Day in order to increase public awareness for the important role which statistics play in all aspects of social and economic life.

51. To commemorate the African Statistics Day, ECA prepared posters which were sent to all member States and issued a press release at the beginning of November 1991. It is encouraging to note that a number of countries of the region also commemorated the African Statistics Day in 1991. The activities included broadcast on State radios, public lectures, displays and national essay competition for which prizes were awarded. It is most suitable that member States include this commemoration on their annual calendar of events. Other possible means for dissemination include articles in the local press, statements or interviews at the national TV, national poster competition in schools, design of T-shirts and issuance of special stamps.

52. The commemoration of African Statistics Day offers an opportunity to urge every individual, as well as government departments, private sector organizations and the mass media to cooperate in the development and improvement of statistics in Africa in the 1990s to enable appropriate decisions affecting the social, economic and environmental aspects of life to be made.

C. New directions for technical cooperation

53. Arrangements for technical cooperation in statistics should be improved and strengthened to contribute to successful implementation of statistical development programmes in the African region. In recent years, donors and recipient countries have been examining new approaches, in the light of past experiences, in order to maximize the impact of the use of technical cooperation resources to enhance statistical capacity in Africa and generate meaningful and sustainable statistical programmes.

54. Funding agencies such as UNDP and UNFPA have already adopted a policy for increased national execution of projects. Such a policy should be encouraged and expanded in the 1990s. There is also the need to promote the use of local experts whenever possible.

55. It is recognized that coordination is the most controversial issue in technical cooperation activities. As already indicated earlier, the lack of coordination led, in a number of cases, to unnecessary duplication of activities, wastage of resources and distortion of priorities of national statistical services (NSSs).

56. At the country level, there should be proper coordination of all statistical activities both within the NSS and among all producers of statistical data, also involving the users. This will avoid duplication of efforts and promote harmonization of concepts, definitions and classifications. There should also be a local body comprising both producers of statistics and representatives of donors to discuss periodically technical cooperation programmes in statistics, assess progress and propose follow-up action. The results of relevant discussions could be fed into the general technical cooperation consultations among government and donors. There should also be a committee of donors in each country to strengthen collaborative arrangements, exchange information and ensure that there is no duplication in technical cooperation activities which they support. Such a machinery already exists in some countries where the UNDP and World Bank representatives chair in turn the relevant meetings.

57. At the regional level, it is proposed that an inter-agency committee should be set up to assist in the coordination of technical cooperation activities in statistics, to discuss and draft guidelines relating to the NA/PRSD exercise, to review periodically progress made by individual countries in assessing their statistical needs and to monitor the implementation of the Strategy for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. It should be mentioned that an Inter-Agency Meeting on Cooperation for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s was convened by ECA in Addis Ababa in December 1990 with the participation of EUROSTAT, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Statistical Office and the World Bank. The meeting discussed among others the African statistics in UNDP programming, the coordination of activities and the perspectives for statistical development in Africa in the 1990s. Consultations are underway to convene the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Committee as recommended in the Strategy.

58. Finally, Technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC), which has been in existence in Africa for some years now, needs to be strengthened in the 1990s, particularly in the field of statistics.

D. Provision of regional advisory services

59. It has been recognized in the Strategy that the regional advisory services in statistics provided by the UN and its specialized agencies have been well appreciated in the past and that such services will continue to be needed, especially as long-term resident experts in statistics are gradually being phased out.

60. It should be indicated that there are two main statistical projects executed by UNECA: The Regional Advisory Service in Demographic Statistics (RASDS), financed by UNFPA, and the Statistical Development Programme for Africa (SDPA), funded by UNDP.

61. There are presently eight advisers under the RASDS which has entered a new phase as from 1 January 1992, hence the funding is now provided under a new project entitled Technical Support Services (TSS). It is envisaged by UNFPA that three regional technical support teams will be located in Addis Ababa, Dakar and Harare. The relevant arrangements are still being finalized. However, it has been agreed that the various advisers of the technical support teams will continue to be attached to their respective agencies.

62. As regards the SDPA project, there have been for most of the period five advisers: one household survey specialist, two statistical training advisers, one national accounts specialist and one data base specialist. The project should have ended on 31 December 1991, at the end of the fourth UNDP inter-country programming cycle (1987-1991). However, UNDP has approved a bridging project covering the period 1 January to 30 September 1992 to take care of the transition period for the preparation of an appropriate programme to implement the Strategy for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. It should also be mentioned that ILO has attached to SDPA, for a number of years now, a regional adviser in household surveys.

63. There is the need to continue and to further strengthen the regional advisory services provided under the two projects mentioned above, although under new programmes in view of new developments. The various UN agencies should also be encouraged to follow the example of ILO which has proved to be a most effective way of co-ordinating technical cooperation activities.

V. ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

64. The Technical Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) may wish to:

(a) Express views and comments on the current state of African statistics;

(b) Consider and approve the Strategy for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, submitted to it by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers;

(c) Make an appeal to the Governments of member States to set up, as soon as possible, Needs Assessment or Programme Review and Strategy Development Teams in order not to delay the activities on statistical development in each country;

(d) Request member States to inform UNECA of any action taken in connection with the NA/PRSD exercise to enable the Commission to perform efficiently its role as the regional institution responsible for the development and promotion of statistics in Africa, as stipulated in the Addis Ababa Plan of Action;

(e) Urge UNDP to support the implementation of the Strategy mentioned above under its fifth inter-country programming cycle; and

(f) Formulate any other comments and suggestions that it deems appropriate under the present agenda item.